

13 BREASTFEEDING FACT SHEET

BREASTFEEDING YOUR PRETERM BABY

You can breastfeed your preterm baby! Preterm babies need breastmilk even MORE than other babies because they are born without all the nutrients stored in the last part of pregnancy. Your body responds to early birth by making breastmilk that is especially suited for your baby's stage of development. Your breast milk changes as your baby gets older. Breastfeeding helps you feel close to your baby and your baby needs this closeness. Preterm babies also spend less energy breastfeeding than bottle feeding.



Breast Milk

- Improves your baby's digestion.
- Has growth hormone that helps your baby grow and develop, especially the brain and eyes.
- Protects your baby from infections, colds and allergies.
- Protects your baby's stomach and bowels (less diarrhea and fewer infections).

BREASTFEEDING TRIAGE TOOL

Pump Your Milk

Start pumping your milk as soon as possible after birth. Use an electric pump with double funnels. Pump at least 6 times during a 24-hour time period to keep up your milk supply. This helps your milk supply get established. Check with your baby's nurse or health care provider about how to store the milk. See Fact Sheet #7 Using the Electric and Hand Pump.



Start Nursing

Nurse your baby at the breast as soon as she is able to breathe well and to coordinate her suck and swallow. Skin-to-skin care (kangaroo hold) helps start breastfeeding. Find a health care provider who specializes in breastfeeding to help you with positions, sucking, attachment and keeping your baby awake. Infants need close follow-up by their health care provider and frequent weight checks.

Special Help

There are a variety of aids that may help you breastfeed, like the supplemental nursing system, nipple shield or having a baby weight scale at home. Talk with your breastfeeding consultant or health care provider.

As your baby gets older and stronger breastfeeding will get easier.